

## Accuracy of Campaign Data

In 2000, some 1,500 candidates and political committees are filing campaign reports with the Public Disclosure Commission. Ninety-seven percent of these filers report on paper, the other three percent use PDC's electronic filing software.

Data filed by electronic filers goes directly into PDC's database. PDC does not alter this data, unless the filer transmits a Schedule C "Correction" form indicating that a previously reported contribution was incorrect. Since the current electronic filing program does NOT automatically adjust the previously reported contribution amount, PDC staff will manually enter the amount of the correction shown on the Schedule C. For example, if a candidate reports receiving \$100 from John Jones, but later files a Schedule C indicating the contributed amount was really \$75, PDC staff will manually enter into the database the contributor's name (John Jones) with a -\$25 contribution amount, thereby accurately reflecting the corrected contribution amount.

For campaigns filing on paper, PDC only has the resources to enter contributor information for candidates seeking one of the nine statewide executive offices or a state legislative office and for political committees supporting or opposing a statewide initiative. Contributor data comes from the C3 reports (monetary contributions) and the Schedule B to the C-4 reports (in-kind contributions) filed by state office candidates and statewide ballot measure committees.

PDC staff makes every effort to enter data that accurately reflects the information reported by the campaign and also conducts quality assurance checks to verify that the data entered into the database matches the information reported by the campaign.

If the campaigns for which PDC staff enters contributor data file Schedule C "Correction" forms, contributor data from the Schedule C is entered into the database in the same manner discussed above for electronic filers.

Full-fledged audits of campaign reports, in response to complaints or PDC's effort to conduct at least some random audits to measure compliance, are typically not completed until after the general election. Although many filings from state and local office candidates and political committees are looked over by PDC staff for omissions and other apparent errors, the data entered into the database reflects what was reported by the candidates and political committees, the data has not been corroborated by PDC staff.

Direct questions regarding the PDC's database to Chief Technology Officer Michael Smith at <mailto:msmith@pdc.wa.gov> or 1-877-601-2828 or 753-1111.